

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 TRSE-00
OMB-01 EB-08 /069 W
-----118613 201304Z /41

O P 201246Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0813
INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L B O N N 13636

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG PARM NATO GW US
SUBJECT: PRM-10 AND FORWARD DEFENSE: GENSCHER URGES
CLARIFICATION FROM USG

REF: BONN 13609 DTG 191829Z AUG 77

SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER BELIEVES THAT THE PUBLIC IMPACT OF THE CONTINUING DEBATE OVER US STRATEGIC INTENTIONS IS "DEVASTATING" AND THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR WASHINGTON TO ISSUE A HIGH-LEVEL CLARIFICATION. END SUMMARY.

1. STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAD JUST CALLED HIM TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN AT THE RENEWED PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND DEBATE OVER US STRATEGIC INTENTIONS. ACCORDING TO VAN WELL, GENSCHER FEELS THAT THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION WHICH HAS BEEN CREATED IS "DEVASTATING."

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2. GENSCHER'S FEAR, VAN WELL SAID, IS THAT LEFTIST POLITICAL FORCES WILL USE THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY AS A WEAPON FOR TRYING TO FORCE A SPEED-UP IN NEGOTIATIONS ON MBFR AND OTHER DISARMAMENT MATTERS IN AN UNDESIRABLE DIRECTION. GENSCHER HAD ASKED VAN WELL TO TELL ME HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR WASHINGTON TO ISSUE A CLARIFICATION AT A "HIGH LEVEL."

3. COMMENT: CONTINUING PLAY IN THE GERMAN PRESS BEARS OUT GENSCHER'S CONCERN OVER RENEWED PUBLIC DEBATE. ILLUSTRATIVE IS A FAIRLY WELL BALANCED FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN THIS MORNING'S GENERAL ANZEIGER, WHICH CARRIES THE MAIN HEADLINE, "NATO STICKS BY 'FORWARD DEFENSE,'" BUT WITH THE SUBHEADING, "HARSH CRITICISM BY THE BONN (COALITION) PARTIES OF PENTAGON STUDY." THE ARTICLE, DATED BOTH BONN AND BRUSSELS, REPORTS CONGRESSMAN ASPIN'S PUBLICATION OF A PENTAGON STUDY WHICH SHOWS THAT HIS EARLIER CALCULATION THAT AN ADDITIONAL \$48 BILLION WOULD BE NEEDED FOR FORWARD DEFENSE HAD BEEN CORRECTED TO \$30 BILLION. THE ARTICLE THEN STATES THAT, ACCORDING TO NATO MILITARY CIRCLES, THE LATTER FIGURE CORRESPONDS TO THE APPROXIMATELY THREE PERCENT INCREASE IN DEFENSE EXPENDITURES WHICH WAS AGREED AT THE LAST NATO SUMMIT.

4. AFTER NOTING THAT A DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN YESTERDAY DECLARED THAT FORWARD DEFENSE REMAINS A PERMANENT PART OF NATO STRATEGY, THE ARTICLE ALSO CITES REMARKS BY DEFENSE SPOKESMEN FROM THE TWO COALITION PARTIES. SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY HORN IS QUOTED AS CRITICIZING THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FOR CASTING DOUBT ON THE BASIS FOR THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. THE DEFENSE SPOKESMAN OF THE FDP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, MOELLEMANN,

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REPORTEDLY WARNED OF THE NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF FORWARD DEFENSE AND OF GIVING UP WITHOUT A FIGHT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.

STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, MILITARY CAPABILITIES, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN13636
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770301-0817
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770841/aaaabinh.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f6c18457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 13609
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1541719
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRM-10 AND FORWARD DEFENSE: GENSCHER URGES CLARIFICATION FROM USG
TAGS: PORG, PARM, GE, US, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f6c18457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009